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An Roinn Coimirce Sóisialaí  
Department of Social Protection

DCU

Ollscoil Chathair  
Bhaile Átha Cliath  
Dublin City University

## DCU Ability 'Introduction to Work' Course

Information booklet for families  
and support people

18th October -

16th December  
2021



## 1. The 'Introduction to Work' course

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The DCU Ability 'Introduction to Work' is an 8-week blended learning course available to learners with intellectual disabilities across the country. The course is particularly suited to learners with a limited experience of work to date.

Learners work with their support person and the course tutors in a home or service environment for approximately 3 hours per week. The course uses a combination of online and offline learning activities.

The overall aim of the 'Introduction to Work' course is to build learners' understanding of work, and to support them to explore ideas for their own working future. Learners will learn about types of work, and will begin to identify their own interests and preferences for work. They will begin to understand and practice skills that will help them to prepare for a workplace setting.

A further aim of this course is to develop the skills of the designated support person in helping the learner on their life long journey of work. As the course progresses, support people and learners will liaise with the course Careers Advisor. Together, they will begin to plan opportunities which can increase the learner's experience of work, enhance skills for work and move closer to paid employment, if this is the learner's goal.

## 2. Course requirements

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### Learner course requirements

In order to attend the course, learners will need:

- A designated support person to work alongside to complete the weekly coursework.
- Time to complete coursework (90 minutes approx.), plus one hour's availability on Thursday mornings throughout the course.
- Access to a laptop or PC (a smartphone screen will not be suitable). *Please note, Google Chromebooks can be loaned by DCU Ability for the duration of the course.*
- Internet connection and an individual email address.

### Role and commitment of the support person

Support people will be asked to attend weekly meetings with the DCU Ability team every Monday during the course at 10am. This meeting will discuss the weekly sessions in detail. It will also give support people the opportunity to collaborate with one another, and to work with the DCU Ability team to develop the best experience possible for their learner during the course.

During the week, support people will work with their learner to complete their coursework. Coursework will include using online supports (DCU Loop, Flipgrid website) and the Learner Activity Folder, as well as taking photos to send to the tutor. Full instructions will be provided in the Support Person Planning Booklet.

On Thursday mornings, support people will work with learners to attend their group Zoom Class Group at a scheduled time (9.30, 10.30 or 11.30am, as agreed per individual learner).

### 3. Course overview and learner goals

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	Theme	Dates	Learner goals
<b>Welcome period</b>	<i>Course welcome week</i>	18 <sup>th</sup> – 22 <sup>nd</sup> October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To start to learn about the course, and how it will be run</li> <li>To meet some people from DCU Ability</li> </ul>
<i>No class during October Bank Holiday / midterm week (25<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> October)</i>			
<b>Week 1</b>	<i>Work and me</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> - 5 <sup>th</sup> November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To learn about some different types of work</li> <li>To start to share my own ideas about work</li> </ul>
<b>Week 2</b>	<i>Why work?</i>	8 <sup>th</sup> - 12 <sup>th</sup> November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To learn about why people work</li> <li>To think about why I might want to work</li> </ul>
<b>Week 3</b>	<i>My skills and interests</i>	15 <sup>th</sup> - 19 <sup>th</sup> November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To think about the things I am good at and things I like to do</li> <li>To share something I am good at</li> </ul>
<b>Week 4</b>	<i>Types of work I might like</i>	22 <sup>nd</sup> - 26 <sup>th</sup> November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To understand that jobs can link to the things people like to do, and are good at</li> <li>To choose some tasks I might prefer in work</li> </ul>
<b>Week 5</b>	<i>Exploring workplaces I might like</i>	29 <sup>th</sup> November- 3 <sup>rd</sup> December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To think about some different jobs and places people work</li> <li>To visit workplaces I am interested in and notice jobs I might like to do there</li> </ul>
<b>Week 6</b>	<i>What will I do next about work?</i>	6 <sup>th</sup> - 10 <sup>th</sup> December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To talk about things I have learned so far about work and me</li> <li>To think about things I might do next about work</li> </ul>
<b>Week 7</b>	<i>My DCU Ability story</i>	13 <sup>th</sup> - 17 <sup>th</sup> December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To talk about what I've done on the course</li> <li>To share my ideas about the course.</li> </ul>

## 4. Weekly schedule and session plans for the course

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### Weekly schedule

The course will follow the following schedule from Week 1 to Week 5, and will vary slightly during Week 6 and 7:

	Monday Support Person Meeting	Learner Session	Thursday Zoom Class Groups
<b>When</b>	Mondays at 10am	Monday-Wednesday	Thursdays at 9.30, 10.30 or 11.30am
<b>Duration</b>	45 minutes (max.)	1 to 1 ½ hours (approx.)	1 hour (max.)
<b>Who is involved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DCU Ability team</li> <li>• Support Person group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learner</li> <li>• Support Person</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DCU Ability team</li> <li>• Learner group</li> <li>• Support Person</li> </ul>
<b>Format</b>	Zoom support person weekly meeting	Online and offline session learning completed by learner, with their support person	Zoom class with small learner group
<b>Details</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Briefing on weekly session plan and resources</li> <li>• Session activity guidance and discussion</li> <li>• General support and feedback forum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use materials from online DCU Loop platform and learner activity folder to follow the session</li> <li>• Learning completed at own pace, in time for Thursday class.</li> <li>• Task photo and video submitted to tutor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share video and task with tutor</li> <li>• Reflect on learning and course experience</li> <li>• Connect with other learners</li> </ul>

Zoom invitations will be issued to support people for Monday meetings, and to learners and support people for Thursday classes. Powerpoints and recordings will be available after meetings and class. The DCU Ability team will be available to support people and learners throughout the week.

## Weekly session plans

Weekly session plans will follow the following structure:

Weekly session plan	
<b>Video from DCU Ability</b>	This is a short session introduction video by DCU Ability, to share learning goals and explain what the learner will be doing that week in simple terms.
<b>New ideas this week</b>	Key learning concepts for the session are presented online (videos, slideshows, quizzes) and using paper resources (posters, stories, tick lists).  Learners work at their own pace, guided by their support person. They may access optional extra activities as part of the session.
<b>My task</b>	Using instructions, learners complete a practical task linked to the learning topic, with an emphasis on their personal input
<b>My video</b>	Learners create a short video on Flipgrid, discussing a personal idea about work, based on that week's theme.
<b>My Thursday Zoom Class</b>	Learners attend an online meeting with other learners (groups of 3) to share their task and video, discuss their learning, and give feedback on the course.

Learners will be provided with a session outline and checklist in their Learner Activity Folder for each week of the course. Support People will have a detailed session plan and a slide summary in their Support Person Planning Booklet

## 5. End of course resources and Next Steps support

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At the end of the course, each learner will receive the following resources:

1. Personal 'All About Me at Work' document

'All About Me at Work' is a document similar to a vocational profile that details learner's contact information, and their top skills, interests and ideas about work. 'All About Me at Work' is written in an accessible style using photos. It can serve as a prompt or reference document that learners can use to share important information about themselves in work, e.g. when meeting an employer. A hard copy and editable electronic version will be provided.

2. Personal 'My DCU Ability Story' booklet

'My DCU Story' is a photo and comment record of each learner's work over the course.

3. 'Next Steps' Toolkit (Learner resource pack and Support person guide)

The 'Next Steps' toolkit provides a continuation from the course. The toolkit focusses on finding opportunities which can increase the learner's experience of work, enhance skills for work and move closer to paid employment if this is the learner's goal. It consists of a Support Person Guide and Learner Resource Pack. Further interventions can be provided in the future where appropriate by the DCU Ability team.

4. DCU Ability Certificate of completion

5. A small DCU memento

## 6. How to apply and further information

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Interested learners should complete the 'I want to do the course' application form by **Monday September 20<sup>th</sup>**. This form is available by email or on the DCU Ability website:

<https://www.dcu.ie/ability/how-apply>

Please note, the form is a 'fillable PDF', which means you can download it and fill it out using Adobe Acrobat reader, or you can print it and scan/ send a photo of the completed form. Completed forms should be sent to the course tutor: [mary.petrie@dcu.ie](mailto:mary.petrie@dcu.ie)

We would encourage you to complete these forms as soon as you can, as places on the course are allocated on a first come, first served basis.

If we are able to provide a place for your learner we will arrange a Zoom or telephone call with you in the coming weeks, to discuss supporting your learner on the course.

The DCU Ability team is available to respond to queries, and to offer further information and support about the course:

Mary Petrie, specialist tutor: [mary.petrie@dcu.ie](mailto:mary.petrie@dcu.ie)

Schira Reddy, careers advisor: [schira.reddy@dcu.ie](mailto:schira.reddy@dcu.ie)